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## Report

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Agriculture

on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (doc. 53/77) for a Regulation amending Regulations (EEC) Nos. 816/70, 2893/74 and 817/70 as regards the maximum total sulphur dioxide content of wines other than liqueur wines

Rapporteur: Mr F. HANSEN

PE 48.824/fin.



By letter of 7 April 1977, the President of the Council of the European Communities requested the European Parliament, pursuant to Article 43 of the EEC Treaty, to deliver an opinion on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a regulation amending Regulations (EEC) Nos. 816/70, 2893/74 and 817/70 as regards the maximum total sulphur dioxide content of wines other than liqueur wines.

The President of the European Parliament referred this proposal to the Committee on Agriculture as the committee responsible and to the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection for its opinion.

On 26 April 1977, the Committee on Agriculture appointed Mr F. HANSEN rapporteur.

It considered this proposal at its meeting of 23 May 1977 and unanimously adopted the motion for a resolution.

Present: Mr Laban, vice-chairman and acting chairman; Mr Ligios, vice-chairman; Mr F. Hansen, rapporteur; Mr Bourdellès, Mr Corrie, Mr Creed, Mr O. Hansen, Mr Hoffmann, Mr Kofoed, Mr Martens, Mr Mitchell, Mr Ney, Mr Pucci, Mr Radoux (deputizing for Mrs Dunwoody), Mr Scott-Hopkins and Mr Vitale.

The opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection is attached.

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The Committee on Agriculture hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution, together with explanatory statement:

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

embodying the opinion of the European Parliament on the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council for a Council regulation (EEC) amending Regulations (EEC) Nos. 816/70, 2893/74 and 817/70 as regards the maximum total sulphur dioxide content of wines other than liqueur wines

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council<sup>1</sup>,
  - having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 43 of the Treaty establishing the EEC (Doc. 53/77),
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and the opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection (Doc. 147/77),
1. Approves the Commission's proposal.
  2. Strongly urges that the sulphur dioxide content of wines should be further reduced as soon as sufficient oenological information is available.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ No. C 88, 13.4.1977, p. 5

EXPLANATORY STATEMENTA. AMENDMENT OF ARTICLE 26a OF REGULATION (EEC) No. 816/70<sup>1</sup>

1. The text of Article 26a of Regulation (EEC) No. 816/70 is radically changed by the proposed regulation under consideration (see annex).

2. The most striking provision contained in the latest proposal is the reduction of the maximum sulphur dioxide content, on release for direct human consumption,

- from 200 mg/l to 175 mg/l in the case of red wines, and
- from 250 mg/l to 225 mg/l in the case of white and rosé wines (which were not mentioned in the previous text).

This provision does not apply to liqueur wines.

3. In addition, and by way of derogation from the above, the maximum sulphur dioxide content for wines having a residual sugar content, expressed as invert sugar, of not less than 5 g/l is reduced from

- 250 mg/l to 225 mg/l for red wines, and
- 300 mg/l to 275 mg/l for white and rosé wines (which were not mentioned in the previous text).

4. Further derogations are proposed for white wines qualifying for the descriptions 'Auslese', 'Beerenauslese' or 'Trockenbeerenauslese', certain quality white wines psr entitled to registered designations of origin and certain white wines described as 'vin supérieur' of designated origin, in accordance with Romanian legislation. The state of the oenological art does not at present allow a reduction of the sulphur dioxide content of these wines.

5. The Commission, aware of the importance of this delicate problem, particularly as regards public health, feels that the list of wines mentioned in point 4 of this report should be amended by the Council acting on a qualified majority, rather than by the Management Committee for Wine.

The Committee on Agriculture doubts whether this change in procedure in itself can provide European consumers with greater protection than hitherto.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ No. L 99, 5.5.1970, p.1

6. Nevertheless, the committee welcomes the provisions relating to Article 26a of Regulation (EEC) No. 816/70, as the reduction of the sulphur dioxide content of wines can only benefit consumers. This proposal accords with the earlier opinion delivered by the Committee on Agriculture<sup>1</sup>, and also meets the call, frequently expressed by Parliament, for quality research in the wine sector. The wine profession as a whole can but benefit from the proposed regulation.

Furthermore, the Committee on Agriculture strongly urges that the sulphur dioxide content of these wines should be further reduced as soon as sufficient oenological information is available.

B. AMENDMENT OF REGULATION (EEC) No. 2893/74<sup>2</sup>

7. Article 2 of the proposed regulation reduces the maximum sulphur dioxide content

- from 300 mg/l to 250 mg/l for sparkling wines, and
- from 250 mg/l to 200 mg/l for quality sparkling wines (for which derogations had been provided),

without prejudice to any more restrictive provisions imposed by States on sparkling wines produced within their territory.

8. The Committee on Agriculture welcomes this provision for the reasons given above. It stresses, however, that the sulphur dioxide content of sparkling and quality sparkling wines should be further reduced as soon as it is technically possible.

C. AMENDMENT OF REGULATION (EEC) No. 817/70<sup>3</sup>

9. Article 3 of the proposed regulation is designed to reduce the maximum sulphur dioxide content

- from 250 mg/l to 200 mg/l for sparkling wines psr (for which derogations had been provided)

without prejudice to any more restrictive provisions imposed by States on sparkling wines psr produced within their territory.

10. The Committee on Agriculture welcomes this provision, although it considers that the sulphur dioxide content of sparkling wines psr should be further reduced as soon as it is technically possible.

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11. For the reasons given above, the Committee on Agriculture approves the Commission's proposal.

<sup>1</sup>Doc. 149/72 of 11 October 1972: rapporteur: Mr F. VALS

<sup>2</sup>OJ No. L 310, 21 November 1974, p.1

<sup>3</sup>OJ No. L 99, 5 May 1970, p.20                      - 7 -

Council Regulation (EEC) No. 816/70 of 28 April 1970 laying down additional provisions for the common organization of the market in wine, Article 26a thereof amended by Regulations (EEC) Nos. 2592/73<sup>1</sup>, 1532/74<sup>2</sup> and 528/77<sup>3</sup>

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Article 26a

1. Without prejudice to the more restrictive provisions that may be applied by Member States for wines produced within their territory, the total sulphur dioxide content for wines intended for direct human consumption other than sparkling wines and liqueur wines, shall not exceed:

- (a) 200 mg/l for red wines,
- (b) 250 mg/l for white wines.

However, for a period ending on 28 February 1978 for wines imported from third countries and wines produced in Community wine-growing zones in which contents higher than those referred to in the first subparagraph are allowed on 1 October 1973, the maximum sulphur dioxide content:

- (a) shall be raised to 300 mg/l for white wines and 250 mg/l for red wines where these wines have a residual sugar content, expressed as invert sugar, equal to or greater than 5 g/l
- (b) may be raised to 400 mg/l for certain white quality wines psr and certain imported white quality wines having special characteristics of production and preparation.

Text of Article 26a proposed in COM(77) 99 final

- 1. Without prejudice to any more restrictive provisions that Member States may impose on wines produced within their territory, the maximum total sulphur dioxide content of wines, other than liqueur wines, on their release to the market for direct human consumption, may not exceed:
- (a) 175 mg/l for red wines,
- (b) 225 mg/l for white and rosé wines.

<sup>1</sup> OJ No. L 269, 26.9.1973, p.1

<sup>2</sup> OJ No. L 166, 21.6.1974, p.1

<sup>3</sup> OJ No. L 69, 16.3.1977, p. 1



Article 26a

2. The Council, acting on a proposal from the Commission, in accordance with the voting procedure laid down in Article 43(2) of the Treaty, may prolong before 31 December 1976 the period referred to in the second and third subparagraphs of paragraph 1, while taking account of the need to reduce in progressive stages the maximum sulphur dioxide contents referred to in these subparagraphs. These reductions shall be decided in accordance with the same procedure.

Text of Article 26a proposed in  
COM(77) 99 final

2. By way of derogation from paragraph 1, the maximum sulphur dioxide content of wines shall be raised to:

- (a) 225 mg for red wines and 275 mg for white and rosé wines where their residual sugar content, expressed as invert sugar, is not less than 5 g/l;
- (b) 300 mg for white wines qualifying for the description 'Auslese' in accordance with Community provisions;
- (c) 400 mg
  - for white wines qualifying for the description 'Beerenauslese' or 'Trockenbeerenauslese' in accordance with Community provisions;
  - for quality wines psr entitled to the registered designation of origin Sauterne, Barsac, Cadillac, Cérons, Loupiac, Saint-Croix-du-Mont, Montbazillac, Bonnezeaux, Quarts de Chaume, Côteaux du Layon or Côteaux de l'Aubance;
  - for white wines described as 'vin supérieur' of designated origin, in accordance with Romanian legislation, and entitled to bear one of the following names:
    - Murfatlar,
    - Cotnari,
    - Tirnave,
    - Pietroasele,
    - Valea Călugărească,
    - Drăgășani.

Article 26a

3. In accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 7 of Regulation No. 24, detailed rules for the application of this Article shall be adopted, in particular:

- (a) the list of quality wines psr referred to in paragraph 1, second subparagraph (b);
- (b) the list of quality wines referred to in paragraph 1, last subparagraph;
- (c) the transitional measures for wines produced before 1 October 1973.

Text of Article 26a proposed in  
COM(77) 99 final

3. The list of white wines in paragraph 2(b) and (c) may be amended by the Council acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission.

4. Rules of application and transitional measures concerning wines produced before 1 September 1977 shall be adopted in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 7 of Regulation No. 24.

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Opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer  
Protection

Letter from the committee chairman to Mr Houdet, chairman of the Committee  
on Agriculture

Luxembourg, 20 May 1977

Dear Mr Chairman,

I would inform you that, at its meeting of 17-18 May 1977, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection considered the proposal from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council (Doc. 53/77) for a Council regulation amending Regulations (EEC) Nos. 816/70, 2893/74 and 817/70 as regards the maximum total sulphur dioxide content of wines other than liqueur wines.

The committee did not find in this proposal anything calling for specific comment on its part. It noted with satisfaction that the aim of the proposed amendments to the Regulations is to reduce considerably the total sulphur dioxide content added as preservative. It hopes that the Commission will pursue this line of action and, as soon as fresh oenological research permits, will put forward proposals for a further reduction in the total sulphur dioxide content, or for that substance to be replaced by a less dangerous preservative, following established procedure<sup>1</sup>.

Yours sincerely,

p.p. Aldo AJELLO

(sgd)

Pietro STAGNO d'ALCONTRES

Committee secretary

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<sup>1</sup> Present: Mr Schwabe, acting chairman; Mr Alber, Mr Baas, Mr Brown, Mr Covelli (deputizing for Mr P. Bertrand), Mr Dalyell (deputizing for Lady Fisher of Rednal), Mr Delmotte (deputizing for Mr Didier), Mr Edwards, Mr Evans, Mr Herbert (deputizing for Mr Gibbons), Mr Martens (deputizing for Mr van Aerssen), Mr Mitchell (deputizing for Mr Guerlin), Mr Ney, Mr Noè, Mr Pintat (deputizing for Mr Bourdellès), Mr Plebe, Mr Schyns, Mrs Squarcialupi, Mr Vernaschi and Mr Veronesi.

